Do POW's Need Torture Training or Political Education? See Page 3

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Why Peron Happened and Can Happen Again

In the editorials celebrating the fall of Peron, two major items in his rise to power are passed over in a discreet silence. One is how much he owed to the cold war. The other is how much he owed to the Catholic Church. Indeed the cold war may be said to have begun with the Argentine question. The first of Yalta's broken promises was not Stalin's promise of free elections in Eastern Europe but our promise that Argentina, the Axis base in the Western hemisphere in World War II, would not be admitted to the United Nations.

Peron as vice president and minister of war and labor was already the real power in Argentina when, in the interest of welding the Western hemisphere into a solid anti-Soviet bloc, we broke that promise and sponsored Argentina for membership. Molotov finally gave in, but at a price: "You can have Argentina if we get Poland." The unity of the victors was breached, and power politics took over. The Lublin regime was thereby established in Poland and a regime Cordell Hull had stigmatized as Fascist was admitted to respectability in the Americas. When Peron ran for President the year after and consolidated his power (with the help of some $13,000,000 contributed by Nazis), Acheson and Spruille Braden tried to defeat him with a "Blue Book" exposing his pro-Axis record and backing, but it was then too late.

Truman Era Mythology

We didn't try again. The mythological rhetoric of the cold war propagated the view that Peron's Argentina was part of the "free world." We hope Mr. Truman in his memoirs will find space to recall that two months after Peron suppressed *La Prensa* he hailed a Latin American Foreign Ministers Conference (with the Argentine present) as "proof of the vitality of free men and their institutions." A Brazilian newspaper, *Correio a da Manha* of Rio de Janeiro noted sadly that there wasn't enough vitality present to discuss the suppression of Argentino's leading newspaper. "Freedom was sacrificed," it wrote, "to the diplomatic convenience of having General Peron's representative sign the conference declarations. . . . Unanimity . . . was not really achieved. *La Prensa* is a reality. Peron's solidarity is at best an equivocation."

Another incident is worth recalling, lest it be imagined from the events of the last few months that Peron and the Catholic Church were always at loggerheads. In Argentina, as in Germany and Italy, the Church was ready to sacrifice liberty and Catholic anti-Fascists to its own purposes. In Peron's 1945-46 campaign for the Presidency, thoughtful Argentines realized this might be their last chance for a long time. An extraordinary event occurred. The Radical, Socialist and Communist parties joined forces, with the unofficial support of the Conservative party, in a Democratic Union which put an opposition ticket into the field. Peron was supported by all the rightist, pro-Axis, nationalist and anti-Semitic hate groups; by a captive labor movement and a renegade split-off from the anti-Clerical Radical party. It was with this motley collection that the Church took its stand for Peron. On the eve of the election a pastoral letter was issued urging Catholics to vote against candidates who advocated separation of Church and State, secular education or legal divorce. This meant vote for Peron.

Argentina's Father Coughlin

In Argentina, as in Italy, there were brave churchmen who fought Fascism. But the majority of the hierarchy, led by the Primate, supported "the revolution of 1943" in which Peron played a leading role. Argentina's "Father Coughlin," Padre Filippo, told his people during the 1945-46 election campaign, "you must shut your mouths because Jesus Christ himself was a great dictator." The Church's reward was the reintroduction of compulsory religious instruction in the schools, where secular education had been the rule since 1884. The new press law forbade, among other things, publication of matter which might undermine Christian morals. "We are pleased," Pius XII said in a message to Peron, "by this recognition of the rights of the Church in the field of Christian education." We may be sure that clerical influence played its part in the behind scenes maneuvers which had made a place for this "new" Argentina in the United Nations.

This is not ancient history. The same forces which helped Peron into power are still at work, and are an obstacle to the creation of a free Argentina. The Church fell out with Peron only because in the end he turned anti-clerical; the logic of totalitarianism pushed Peron as it once pushed Mussolini into conflict with the Church. We may be sure that the Argentine hierarchy is shopping around for a safe General who will carry on in the spirit of 1943. We may be sure that the State Department is also looking for a cooperative military man. U. S. firms have some $400,000,000 invested in Argentina; Standard Oil of California has an exploitation contract with Peron, as yet unratified, which was so juicy that we were willing even to overlook church burnings for the sake of it.

In the context of Argentina these forces may fashion a new "strong" regime. The context is one in which free traditions never took deep and wide root. The democracy overthrown by successive Generals from 1930 on was in too many respects an oligarchy to win mass support. The underprivileged working classes were too easily open to the bribery of compulsory wage increases and a dictator's social welfare benefits. To overlook these fundamental factors in the Argentine picture is to fail to see why Peron lasted as long as he did, and why a new *Peronismo* could so easily be established.

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First Hearing Shows Danger to Civil Liberties From Majority Pressure Groups

Will the Hennings Committee Hit The Real Evils, or Spread Itself Thin?

On the second floor of the Capitol there is a relic of the early Republic which stirs the imagination of the visitor, a small semi-circle of a room with gray marble pillars at the back and an arched sky-light. This was the original Senate chamber, in which Webster spoke and Clay. Here the Senate met until 1860, and afterwards, until 1935, the Supreme Court. Behind the long mahogany bench, under the picture of Lincoln reading the Emancipation Proclamation to his Cabinet, Taney once presided. This, too, was the secluded Olympus on which Holmes and Brandeis sat.

This chamber, no longer in daily use, was opened up on the 168th anniversary of the Constitution. The new Senate subcommittee on constitutional rights held a special hearing in it which was intended, with ceremonial flourish, to launch its long awaited investigation. Eleven "citizens," representing as many organizations, were invited to sit on the high bench and "petition for redress of grievances" while the subcommittee listened from the old counsel table below.

The Pageant Was Not So Sedate

The subcommittee plans to begin with the Bill of Rights, and then go one by one through the various other "rights" guaranteed by the Constitution. The opening affair was a projection of what some of the subcommittee would like the coming investigation to be—a kind of sedate pageant, in which representatives of various respectable mass organizations would, as the chairman, Senator Hennings of Missouri said, "focus renewed national attention upon the basic precepts of our democracy."

The result at the opening session was what one would expect if representatives of the Southern Baptists, the Vatican, the Shiite Muslims, the Grand Rabbi of Jerusalem, and the Orthodox Patriarch were convened to focus renewed attention on the basic precepts of the Bible. Everybody was full of reverence for the Constitution, but everybody interpreted it his own way for his own purposes. Everybody was polite, but enough was said to show how easily this could become the curtain raiser for a tumultuous national brawl.

Panel Split 6-5

Of the eleven "citizen" witnesses, six showed no concern at all about civil liberties. Three of the six, the spokesmen for the American Bar Association, the American Legion and the Knights of Columbus emphasized the need for more "vigilance," i.e. repression. The Legion and the K. of C. would turn the subcommittee into another "un-American activities" committee.

Two other "citizens," the president of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce and the legislative director for the American Farm Bureau Federation, devoted themselves in almost identical language to the dangers of "compulsory unionism" and centralized government. They are still fighting for the open shop and against the welfare state. The "workingman citizen," Secretary-Treasurer William F. Schnitzler of the A. F. of L., also had not one word to say about any danger to freedom of opinion. He emphasized only Taft-Hartley and similar threats to trade unionism.

Much of the current threat to civil liberties stems directly from attitudes fostered by these major pressure groups. If the subcommittee really tries to defend civil liberties, it will find itself in hot water with them.

The other five were the voices of those who look to this subcommittee for aid. They did not have the same sure tone of command. The head of the National Education Association timorously reflected the agonies of the teaching profession but accepted the fatal premise that Communists of course should not be allowed to teach. Mrs. John G. Lee of the League of Women Voters named no names (the American Legion and the K. of C. were only a few seats away) but complained that one of the main threats to free discussion came from certain private associations.

J. Russell Wiggins of the *Washington Post* discussed freedom of the press with competence and vigor. He made the only reference at the session to the fact that invasion of the rights of Communists may also affect everyone's basic liberties; he protested recent legislation requiring Communists to register their printing equipment; he said "this comes closer to press licensing than any measure enacted since the adoption of the Constitution."

The Boldest Liberal

The boldest liberal witness was Dr. Eugene Carson Blake of Philadelphia, president of the National Council of Churches of Christ. He hit the House Un-American Activities Committee by name. He struck out at the whole idea of letting Congress decide what is "American." He protested the Attorney General's list and the denial of passports.

But none of these four spoke with that immediate sense of injury which one felt in Roy Wilkins of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He told the story of the way in which Negroes have been boycotted, ruined and murdered in Mississippi in the past few months in an effort to keep them from exercising their right to vote and their right to unsegregated schooling. That no white liberal had a word to say of the Negro's struggle was mutely eloquent of how segregated the lives of the two races still are.

Senator Hennings spoke in his opening remarks of the rights won by "Anglo-Saxon" struggle against "tyrannical rulers." This first hearing should show the subcommittee that a lot has happened since Magna Charta was won. Then the struggle was simple. The enemy was a despot. The Barons, in putting the squeeze on King John, were also helping to make every Englishman's life and property more secure.

The Common Man His Own Despot

The struggle for liberty and law within the framework of a democratic society like ours is more complicated and less comfortable. John Citizen is himself king, and he is now both the oppressed and the oppressor. Men of one color oppress those of another. The many try to gag the non-conformist few. The rich take advantage of the poor.

Those who fight for constitutional rights are compelled to take sides whether they wish to or not. The issues can rarely be settled on an abstract basis, once one gets beyond simple rights like jury trial or near-absolute fundamentals like freedom of opinion. Beyond this is a vast area in which one man's "right" violates some other man's. The right of a man to be free collided in the Civil War with another man's right to the property he had acquired. The worker's right to organize for self-protection collided in the New Deal period with the employer's right to hire and fire as he pleased.

In widening its target to the whole field of Constitutional rights, the subcommittee is wading in where generations of jurists found difficulty in treading. It thus threatens to dissipate its energies, and to entangle itself in scores of controversies, some ancient and long settled, which there is no point in reopening.

An example is its decision to begin its regular hearings October 3 with freedom of religion, a liberty in no real danger. This is not only a waste of time but, as the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs points out in its September bulletin, may open up thorny religious issues best left alone. There are two urgent areas—the rights of the Negro and the right to think, speak and associate freely, without danger of thereby losing one's job, reputation or right to travel. The subcommittee must decide whether to wade in and wage battle where it counts, or evade the real issues by spreading itself thin.

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Some Important POW Problems the Pentagon Shoves Under the Rug

It's Easier to Concentrate on the Melodrama of "Torture Training"

When Congress convenes perhaps it may be possible to have an intelligent inquiry into all this talk of "brain-washing" and into the "torture training" the armed services have begun to administer. I would like to call attention to an Associated Press dispatch from San Francisco which I saw nowhere else but in the *Baltimore Sun* of September 16. It was an interview with three American turncoats who changed their minds, came out of China in July and are now awaiting court martial. All three, according to the *AP*, "ridiculed as 'childish' the U. S. Air Force's Nevada school against brain-washing."

All three stressed the fact that the big problem for POW's under interrogation was not torture but lack of education. "When I was captured," Otho G. Bell said, "I expected to get shot, instead they shook my hand. . . . The big thing is education. A man with an education can stand up to the Chinese or anybody else. But you got to know what they're talking about." Lewis W. Griggs said, "And all those Chinese torture stories aren't true either. A lot of guys came back from POW camps and told some pretty terrible tales—just to cover up what they had done themselves. The first real step is to teach democracy." William A. Cowart said, "A man had to know what communism is."

Most Not "Brain-Washed"

Now this is borne out by the recent report of the Secretary of Defense's Advisory Committee on Prisoners of War. The Committee found that in some cases American prisoners were subjected to mental and physical torture. "Most of the prisoners, however," it said, "were not subjected to brain-washing, but were given a high-powered indoctrination for propaganda purposes." And here the trouble was the political ignorance of the average American.

"When plunged into a Communist indoctrination mill," the Advisory Committee report said, "the average American POW was under a serious handicap. . . . He had to tell what he knew about American politics and American history. And many times the Chinese or Korean instructors knew more about these subjects than he did. . . . Many [of the American POWS] had never before heard of Karl Marx. . . . They couldn't answer arguments in favor of Communism with arguments in favor of Americanism, because they knew very little about their America."

It is more dramatic and hate-breeding to stress "torture" than to face up to ignorance, though ignorance was the bigger problem. "Brain-washing" is more than nine-tenths myth. At page 63 of the printed report is a glimpse from one of its many appendices of how the Russians converted many German soldiers including Gen. von Paulus during the last war.

Communist Evangelism

"The reindoctrination of a Nazi-indoctrinated German," the report says, "demanded a high-powered approach akin to evangelism. It was nothing more than a high-gear recruiting campaign. It did not involve 'menticidal' pressuring or anything akin to so-called 'brain-washing.' *Boiled down, it amounted to advertising.*" (Italics added.)

The report goes on to say that while the Russians were working in this way on German prisoners, "the Chinese Reds, waging civil war, adopted similar tactics. Nationalist prisoners were herded into 'political camps' and harangued with the Red Chinese version of Marxian doctrine." (At page 51 in the same appendix one may see that both sides did the same thing in our Civil War: "Some 3,170 Union captives exchanged blue for gray. About 5,450 Confederates went over to the Federal side. One famous company of 'reconstructed Rebs' was sent West to man a frontier post and relieve a Union garrison needed on the front.")

One reason the armed services prefer the melodrama of "torture schooling" to the problem of political education is that the latter might get them into trouble with professional patriots and witch hunters. In the same appendix, hidden away in a portion of the report few people will ever see, the Advisory Committee said one reason for the lack of political education lay in "alarmists" about Communism. "The fear of Marxist literature, for example," the report says," caused the banning of *Das Kapital* from a number of school and public libraries." The committee thought it was important to teach Communism and to teach Americanism, "the Bill of Rights. Or call it Democracy."

Imagine the Army Teaching Marx!

But imagine the uproar if the Army were to get soldiers to read Marx in preparation for Communist captivity. There are wide circles in this country, for that matter, which regard talk about the Bill of Rights as equally suspect—"That's commie talk. Only commies talk about the Constitution." Obviously it's easier to concentrate on torture.

There is another aspect of the prisoner of war problem which is also being shoved under the military rug because it is unpleasant and uncomplimentary. Much of the suffering in POW camps was caused by lack of discipline and lack of proper leadership by the officers. This proved an important problem. After all very few Americans signed germ war confessions, or joined the enemy side during the war. Of 4,428 American fighting men returned from enemy prison camps in Korea, there were only 565 whose conduct was even questioned and of these 373 were cleared or had the charges dropped after investigation. Not all the rest are guilty of misconduct. The report expects only about 50 to be brought to trial. That is a good record.

But the survival record is terrible. The report says 2,730 Americans died in Korean prison camps—38 percent of the total. Brutality early in the war by the North Koreans, and primitive Oriental conditions were partly to blame. But the report makes it clear that in some cases a high rate of death was due to lack of discipline and officer leadership. A vivid picture of this is given at page 12 of the report:

Discipline and the Death Rate

"By design and because some officers refused to assume leadership responsibility, organization in some of the POW camps deteriorated to a every-man-for-himself situation. Some of the camps became indescribably filthy. The men scuffled for their food. Hoarders grabbed all the tobacco. Morale decayed to the vanishing point. Each man mistrusted the next. Bullies persecuted the weak and sick. Filth bred disease and contagion swept the camp. So men died for lack of leadership and discipline."

There is considerable evidence that among the British and the Turkish POW's a much higher survival rate was due to the better discipline and the leadership shown by the officers. Too many officers treated the last war as a chance to do some "yankee trading" and enrich themselves. A few brought the same attitude to POW camps, and sought "deals" by which they could better their own lot at the expense of others. This, like the problem of political education, is neither easy nor glamorous.

I want to touch finally on another equally prickly problem. "Many of the accused," the report says, "informed on their prison-mates with dire consequences for the victims." How are you going to cut down on "ratting" when a whole generation in this country is being brought up to believe that informing is an obligation? A generation that sees teachers punished and discharged for refusing to inform cannot help but gather that the "smart guy" tells and saves his own skin.

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Capitol Follies: Ike's Favorite Movie Maker Sues for His Passport . . .

. . . And Jim Patton Finds G.O.P. Farm Policy Too Pro-Soviet

Don't tell Senator Eastland but Carl Foreman, who filed suit here last week for a passport, wrote President Eisenhower's favorite movie, "High Noon". . . . Fortunately for both of them the *Daily Worker* called the film "Fascistic." (This is another issue on which the *Weekly* agrees with Ike.) . . . Foreman's suit will test whether the State Department can deny a passport to a man who is no longer a Communist but declines to "prove his sincerity" by naming others. . . .

Dr. Ralph E. Lapp, former Atomic Energy Commission consultant seems to have odd ideas on what makes people feel secure. He says our stockpile of atomic weapons is now so huge as to be the equivalent of "several tons of TNT for every inhabitant of our planet." Dr. Lapp thinks the President should publish the size of the stockpile as a "potent force for peace." Just how this constitutes a force for peace was not made clear. The knowledge that one country has enough explosives on hand to blow every man, woman and child on earth to bits might conceivably make some other peoples nervous.

One passage in the Lapp speech should make Americans nervous, too. He predicted a sharp slump in the uranium market in the next decade. He might have added that industry is depending on the sale of explosive fissionable materials from power producing reactors to make their operation profitable. . . . Will there some day be a uranium-and-plutonium lobby whooping it up like the aviation lobby for an intensified arms race?

In this connection, notice the rash of stories on how swiftly we are being overtaken by the Soviet air fleet. . . . Preliminary budgets are now being worked out in Washington, and the Air Force is leaking scare stories to fight off economy. . . . Before World War I, the British and German Navy Leagues used to engage in similar tactics, each exaggerating the strength and size of the other's navy in order to push up appropriations in their respective parliaments. . . .

One of these scare stories is in the September issue of *Fortune*, by Charles J. V. Murphy, through whom the Air Force also fed out its first attack on Robert Oppenheimer. . . . This article reveals just how large "an x-haunted area of extrapolation, inductive surmise and plain guesswork" there is in trying to arrive at estimates of just what the Russians do have. . . .

"It is possible, for example," Mr. Murphy writes, "by shifting a few technical assumptions to credit the Soviet *Flashlight* fighter with a speed in excess of Mach 2—i.e. twice the speed of sound—whereas the conservative rating of *Flashlight* would put its speed at about 700 mph. Similarly, a 15 percent error in the assumed fuel consumption of the Bison's engines could add or subtract 1,000 miles from its range."

Mr. Murphy's *bete noir*, like that of the Alsop brothers, is Secretary of Defense Wilson. "He is fond of remarking," Mr. Murphy writes, "that 'the Russians aren't all forty feet tall.' " . . . Nothing seems so subversive to lobbyists for higher arms appropriations than to doubt that the enemy is superhuman.

While American capitalists wickedly try to slow down the world arms race, the American labor movement stands firm. The September 16 issue of the *A. F. of L. News Reporter* attacks Secretary of the Treasury Humprey for trying to balance the budget by cutting military appropriations and says the workers of this country "don't want to save a few dollars in their tax bill at the expense of the nation's safety."

The real story behind that suit to force the government to keep its promise of credit aid to the Harvey Machine Company's aluminum project in Oregon is that Alcoa used its influence in the Eisenhower Administration against another independent competitor. . . . The Democrats hit political pay dirt in the newly blocked 2.4 billion dollar deal between the Air Force and A. T. & T. But considering A. T. & T.'s power, and the close links between the Air Force and leading Democratic politicians, this story is likely to fizzle out. . . . The party showed little guts in the Dixon-Yates affair; a handful of Democrats carried the ball with little help from the Senate leadership. . . .

The National Farmers Union is jubilant because the G.O.P. is being forced to fall back on its "Conservation Acreage Reserve" plan to cope with the problem of growing crop surpluses and falling farm prices. This goes back to a proposal first made by Henry Wallace in 1937 when he warned that rigid farm supports would periodically run into surplus trouble and suggested that land be leased from farmers to take it out of production, or into soil-building non-surplus crops.

At the same time President James Patton of the NFU has grown quite violent on the subject of the Administration's sudden reversal in favor of trade with the Soviet bloc—"a confession of the failure of the Eisenhower sliding scale policy . . . an attempt to get the farm depression . . . removed from the 1956 Presidential campaign . . . another Will o' the Wisp. . . . I do not regard our abundant supplies of farm products as a curse that ought to be dumped into the first rat-hole that opens up. . . ." After all these years of being Red-baited is Jim Patton trying to prove he's more anti-Soviet than the Republicans?

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